

The invention is claimed as follows:

1. A retainer assembly for retaining at least one inner pole of an extensible and retractable pole assembly within an outer pole of the extensible and retractable pole assembly  
5 when the at least one inner pole is retracted within the outer pole, said retainer assembly comprising:

a first section having first and second portions,

a second section having first and second portions, said first portions of said first and second sections capable of fastening to one another across an open end of the outer pole to  
10 retain the at least one inner pole within the outer pole, and

a third section positioned around the outer pole which is fastened to said second portions of said first and second sections.

2. A retainer assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein said first, second and third sections  
15 are at least partially formed of hook and loop fastener material.

3. A retainer assembly as defined in claim 1, further including a ring section connected to and positioned around the open end of the outer pole, said ring section having a pair of slots provided therethrough which are opposite one another, said first section extending  
20 through one of said slots of said ring section such that said first and second portions of said first section are provided on opposite sides of said ring section, said second section extending through the other one of said slots of said ring section such that said first and second portions of said second section are provided on opposite sides of said ring section.

4. A retainer assembly as defined in claim 1, further including a ring section integrally formed with and positioned around the open end of the outer pole, said ring section having a pair of slots provided therethrough which are opposite one another, said first section extending through one of said slots of said ring section such that said first and second portions of said first section are provided on opposite sides of said ring section, said second section extending through the other one of said slots of said ring section such that said first and second portions of said second section are provided on opposite sides of said ring section.

5. A method of retaining at least one inner pole of an extensible and retractable pole assembly within an outer pole thereof when the at least one inner pole is initially in an extended position relative to the outer pole, said method comprising the steps of:

a) providing a retainer assembly including a first section having first and second portions, a second section having first and second portions, and a third section positioned around the outer pole which is fastened to said second portions of said first and second sections;

b) retracting the at least one inner pole within the outer pole to a collapsed position; and

c) fastening the first portions of said first and second sections of the assembly to one another across an open end of the outer pole such that the at least one inner pole is retained within the outer pole.